



**RECLAIMING
OUR PAST.
BUILDING
OUR FUTURE.**

Indigenous History Month 2021



SHELDON MORRISEAU (Operator)

Boozhoo. Sheldon Morriseau n"dizhinikaz, Anemki Waazhew n'doongi, Makwa Dodem.

Hello, my name is Sheldon Morriseau and I am from Thunder Mountain at Fort William First Nation and I am Bear Clan. Thank you, Creator, for this day.

I am a grass dancer a pipe carrier and also I make regalia and porcupine head dresses. Miigwetch for this day. I was born and raised on Fort William First Nation just outside of Thunder Bay Ontario. I attended school in the city and was bullied, called derogatory names, and picked on because I was from "the rez" or the "mission". Kind of funny that it is referred to the mission as the Jesuit priests came to our territory and lands and changed everything. They changed our names to Francophone names, my family last name was Netemegeesic before it was changed. The priests and colonizers even made us relocate our entire Reservation from the shores of the Kaministiquia River where we harvested fish and water to supply our crops to inland where we no longer had those resources.

Although living on the reserve was tough at times we learned how to hunt and fish, we learned to forage for other foods as in berries and cedar for tea. We didn't have it as bad as some northern reserves do. We had running water, resources of the city and even education. I come from a very large family, my grandparents had 21 children, and that is important to my upbringing as my cousins were my first friends and still are. We all played and grew up together on the reserve.

I never truly knew my cultural background other than I knew we had a pow-wow up on the mountain. I was on my own when I was 17 and met some very inspirational people who brought me back to my roots. Richard Lyons, Jim Mishquart, Pat Meshake RIP, Johnny Pierre RIP, Tony Towedo RIP, and several others who took me under their wings and taught me the red road. I started

dancing when I was 18 and was gifted my first feather on the way to a pow-wow by Tony. In order to honor this feather he told me I had to quit drugs and alcohol, which I did cold turkey right then and there. It was tough trying to explain to my friends why I no longer drank but they eventually accepted it. I have danced all over Canada and the US and it is amazing to connect with people who are thrilled to attend a pow-wow and have pictures taken with them. I was showcased in a story by a lady who attended her first pow-wow. This was very humbling and an honor that she wanted to share my story.

I graduated high-school and worked for a few years. I was also in the casino business for about 10 years as a table games dealer and then moved into a management position. I then moved to attend college in Arizona where I became a golf professional and received a degree in Applied Business Management. I traveled the US, working in Arizona, Minnesota, and Texas. I attended Texas A&M University for firefighting preservice as that was my next career.

I moved back to Canada in 2011 to pursue firefighting but it never came to fruition. I started my career at the TTC in June of 2016 and now have almost 5 years on as a Bus Operator. Always striving for more to advance my career to eventually become an Instructor. Which has been my goal from day 1 in training. Shortly after I started at the TTC, I met Janelle who is now my wife, we were married in Hawaii in May 2018.

I would hope that the Commission and the ATU 113 will recognize that more needs to be done to provide opportunities to the Indigenous community. There are a lot of talented and well educated people in the Indigenous community who could be a great asset to the TTC in many facets.

Miigwetch for allowing me to share my story.